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UM receives grant for experimental social welfare program

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UM RECEIVES GRANT
FOR EXPERIMENTAL
SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAM

MISSOULA--

The Experimental Undergraduate Social Welfare Program at the University of Montana has been funded for the third consecutive year, according to Dr. Norman Taylor, vice president for research.

The \$497,178 program is an experimental project approved as a contractual agreement between the University of Montana and the State Department of Public Welfare. The budget is provided by the UM and a federal grant funded through the State Department of Public Welfare.

Continued and extended funding has been granted according to number of students enrolled, quality of the program itself, extended research, more and broader courses in the on-campus phase of the program, and implementation of planned programs.

The program is divided into three phases. The first is on-campus social welfare instruction for undergraduates, designed for social welfare practitioners and for other interested persons. This phase includes three objectives: (1) an integrated curriculum in social welfare, recognizing the social worker as a change agent, involved socially and psychologically with the lives of his clients; (2) expansion of a field work practicum, which places social welfare students in agencies under strict supervision; (3) an increased emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach. Courses required in disciplines such as home economics, psychology, and anthropology are subsidized by the department of sociology for students needing the courses.

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Phase Two is a state-wide continuing education program of advanced training for social welfare practitioners, including employes of the State Department of Public Welfare.

Courses offered would be equivalent to short-term extension courses in specialized training. Courses are taught by instructors from the department of sociology at the UM, who travel to towns throughout the state.

A research program is the third phase of the experimental program. This offers sociological analysis of the role of the social worker. Results from the research program are used to update both the on-campus undergraduate curriculum and the continued education program.

The experimental program has been well received, according to Dr. Idris Evans, social welfare department chairman. Enrollment in the social welfare curriculum has increased 56 per cent from 1968 to 1969.

The State Department of Public Welfare has shown good support and cooperation with the program, Dr. Evans said.

Future plans for the experimental program include advance placement for UM undergraduates in social welfare in national graduate schools. The department also hopes to hire staff members having both an M.S.W. degree (the terminal graduate degree in social welfare) and a Ph.D. degree in sociology or psychology. The department aims to promote the idea that action programs need to be systematically evaluated, Dr. Evans said. An understanding by both sociologists and practitioners is necessary, that both theory and research are important to effectiveness in the area of social work and public welfare, he said.

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